

Toilet Paper Tube Corals

Purpose:

This is a simple way to illustrate a coral polyp.

Materials:

Toilet Paper Tube- represents the coral calcium carbonate skeleton

Paper- represents the coral polyp animal

Green colored pencils or markers- used to mark the paper to represent the zooxanthellae algae

Tape

Make an individual coral polyp:

Each student needs a 1/2 page of paper (8.5 X 5.5).

Make dots on the paper using the markers to represent the zooxanthellae

Cut the ends of the paper along the 8.5” edge to make a fringe (make the cuts so you have about a 3” fringe)- the fringe are the coral’s tentacles

Roll the fringed piece of paper and insert it into the toilet paper tube so that the fringe is towards the top. The hole in the middle is the polyps mouth.

Using your fingers- it is possible to move the polyp up and down to simulate the polyp extending its tentacles to feed and withdrawing them again.

Make a Coral Colony:

Collect numerous individual toilet paper coral polyps and use the tape to “bundle” them together to make a colony.

Acknowledgement

This activity was developed for NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program by staff at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Credit

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